

TOWN OF ACTON SELECT BOARD MEETING
August 30, 2023
6:00pm

APPROVED

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER / PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Winchell, Jr. called the meeting to order.

2. WARRANTS/BILLS

Signed

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Walsh made a motion to approve the agenda; seconded by Norwood. All in favor. Motion carried.

4. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

Walsh made a motion to approve the minutes of the last meeting; seconded by McGurty. Motion carried 3-0-1 Norwood abstained.

5. TOWN ADMINISTRATOR WEEKLY UPDATE

Roux confirmed that Town Report items are due on September 7. Winchell, Jr. questioned how many have been received. Roux advised two. McGurty questioned if we could see the first draft prior to September 7 to review in advance and give time to make changes. Roux will send out an email with an additional request.

Roux advised 74 tax liens were processed last week.

The DOT called and spoke with Roux to advise Route 109 funding has been confirmed – between Garvin Road and New Hampshire State line. The project will begin in the Fall of 2024. Letters will be sent out anyone in the Acton Zip Code and Appraisers will begin knocking on doors to discuss temporary and potential permanent easements.

Reminder that the Transfer Station is closed on Monday for Labor Day – this will go out in the newsletter and be posted on the website as well.

Website training will be set up for next week: Department Heads and Committees will be able to maintain their own pages. Dan will continue to oversee the website.

The Forest/Conservation Committee is looking for new members; the openings have been posted. There are currently 4 members including the Forester.

A liquor license application has been received for KB Enterprises (Willy's); a public hearing is scheduled for Wednesday, September 6. This will be advertised and posted.

Roux advised she received notice from an individual interested in joining the Planning Board and discussed with Winchell, Jr., setting up a meeting Wednesday, September 6, around 4:30pm. Roux will schedule.

6. DEPARTMENT HEAD / COMMITTEE CHAIR UPDATES

A. Transfer Station

Robin Ham, Transfer Station:

Overseas containers will be delivered on Tuesday, September 5: Dist. 1 will pull out old containers with excavator. The old 45-foot container was sold for \$200, and the 20-foot container will be disposed of locally. Railroad ties will be purchased with the funds from the sale of the large trailer.

7. LIAISON UPDATES

Norwood announced a meeting with Mr. Ross on Thursday August 31st, to discuss the School Board, determine their needs and learn more about the School Board.

McGurty advised that an investment was rolled over last week, with a 5.4 investment rate over 90 days. The Town is working with Mark Roy updating accounts payable and the Auditors were in the office this week. Discussion is in process regarding when the Town should expect the Audit Report. It is currently pending the school.

8. OLD BUSINESS

A. Fire Station Phone System

Roux announced we are still seeking additional bids. We have one quote from the current provider and have one quote pending for next week. Winchell, Jr. suggested giving it one additional week.

B. Lincoln School Committee Request /Richard Neal

Roux provided a project report two weeks ago to review. Richard Neal is present to provide an overview of the project.

Richard Neal advised the school has been sitting for a while with no work being done and needs to be updated. Neal suggested a new roof, exterior paint, and the interior needs to be cleaned up and repainted. There doesn't appear to be any structural damage. The Acton/Shapleigh Historical Society is willing to assist. Additional volunteers would be needed to complete the project. Neal suggested a committee be established to see what needs to be done and complete a report to provide to the Select Board for review. McGurty questioned if the goal was to preserve the building with no intended use or to create use for the building. Neal indicated preserving the building for potential use of history classes.

Roux suggested the Forest and Conservation Committee. Winchell, Jr. agreed with this being part of the Forest and Conservation. The Historical Society wanted to originally take on project, Roux questioned what happened with the original plan. Norwood proposed that the Historical Society keep the project and if assistance is needed locally, can the Forest and Conservation Committee step in to assist as needed or can the Historical Society create a sub-committee and request additional membership for the requested sub-committee.

Joyce Bakshi indicated that Winchell, Jr. and Norwood's suggestion to expand the Forest and Conservation Committee to include preservation would be best. The single room school should be preserved. Winchell, Jr. suggested speaking with the Forest and Conservation Committee to discuss the potential for expanding the committee to include Preservation.

9. NEW BUSINESS

A. Mousam Lake Association

David Landry, Director of the Mousam Lake Association:

Landry advised the Mousam Lake Association just heard this week that a decision was made to replace but not enlarge the West Shore Drive Culvert. Landry indicated that the association was disappointed with the decision not to enlarge the culvert as there are as many Acton residents on Mousam Lake as there are on Square Pond. This has a negative impact on Square Pond by not enlarging the Culvert and providing better access. S.P.I.A. and Mousam Lake Association are working together to preserve the waters of the lakes. The Association was not directly reached to discuss the Culvert Project. Walsh advised the project has been in the works for over 2.5 years. Winchell, Jr. continued stating this was in the paper, it was properly advertised, and Public Hearings took place to discuss the culvert project.

Landry was speaking with the Commissioner of the IFNW and he also thought this would take place later. Winchell, Jr. indicated IFNW was participating in these meetings. Winchell, Jr. questioned as this project was approved so long ago, why is the Mousam Lake Association advising concerns now.

According to the numbers: ASYCC provided the following for 2022:
Square Pond and Mousam Lake are approximately the same size.
Square Pond had 1308 boat launches and courtesy boat inspections.
Mousam Lake had 6987 boat launches and courtesy boat inspections (5x as many as Square Pond).
Mousam Lake saw 84 percent of the total boating activity.

You can't get a pontoon or ski boat through the culvert on Square Pond; therefore, boats are going to Mousam. By not enlarging the culvert, boats will go to Mousam instead of going to Square and there is not equitable access. The Mousam Lake Association is unhappy with the decision made and indicated they did not follow the process from start to finish.

Winchell, Jr. indicated this was a lengthy process, and it did not happen overnight. Contracts have been signed and work is starting. Winchell, Jr. questioned why not Great East Lake? Landry stated Great East doesn't have great parking: the ramp is okay.

Walsh advised of the options available for the culvert, the Acton Taxpayers voiced their opinions. Cost was taken into consideration and the decision has been made. No one spoke against the plan for the culvert.

B. Sign Tax Commitment

The Tax rate was set at 6.45 at the last meeting. The Assessors Certificate of Assessment is provided for signature. O'Donnell reviewed the numbers.

McGurty questioned assessment disputes. Roux advised that as the tax bills have been committed the disputes will no longer be processed with O'Donnell. Abatement requests will start once tax bills go out to taxpayers.

Walsh made a motion to sign the tax commitment at 6.45; seconded by Norwood. All in favor. Motion carried. Signed.

C. York County Sheriff's Department – New Contract

Roux advised a contract was provided with some changes: a weekly verses monthly report. A request was made for a fiscal year budget.

D. CMP Pole Permit

Walsh made a motion to sign pole permit to place 3 new poles at the intersection of Hopper Road and Independence Way; seconded by McGurty. All in favor. Signed.

E. Hawk Road

Will Langley, Dist. 1 Road Commissioner

Langley is having Hawk Road surveyed. A problem has been addressed as Langley is unable to find a date when Hawk Road was officially accepted as a town road. The town does partial maintenance. Langley is looking to rebuild the road (worth \$40,000). McGurty suggested bringing this to the Town Meeting to accept the road as a town road prior to starting the road, as there is no record of it being accepted as a town road.

Winchell, Jr. advised that once the survey is complete, residents along this section of road will need to give an easement, prior to going to the Town Meeting. Roux questioned if this was within the budget for this fiscal year. Langley confirmed it is not earmarked for a specific project.

F. 229-046 Taxes

Roux announced there is a 39-acre lot on H Road that was foreclosed on in 2014. The Town foreclosed after three years of unpaid taxes: 2013, 2014 and 2015. Taxes are not normally written off; in case the town decides to sell. The Auditor wants to write off the back taxes to eliminate them from being rolled over continually.

McGurty made a motion to write off \$5050.21 associated with parcel 229.046; seconded by Walsh. All in favor. Motion carried.

G. Committee Policies & Procedures

Norwood discussed that after working with some committees and chairs, members are looking for more guidance and support: what does it mean to serve on a committee; what is the process for filing a complaint. Norwood indicated he would like to put something together for committee members (located in one spot); to assist with getting more interest and answering questions in advance prior to members volunteering for a committee: like an employee handbook, but for committee members. Providing suggestions for clear communication between the select board and committee members. McGurty questioned who would be assisting with this process. Norwood would spearhead this process.

Winchell, Jr. suggested including a code of conduct along with procedure. All committees should have this if there isn't an ordinance in place.

H. Executive Session 405 6 A -1 – Personnel Matter

McGurty made a motion to go into Executive Session 405 6.A.1. – Personnel Matter; seconded by Walsh. All in favor. Motion carried.

Walsh made a motion to come out of Executive Session 405 6.A.1. – Personnel Matter at 7:20pm; seconded by Norwood. All in favor. Motion carried.

I. 106-002 Agreement

McGurty made a motion to approve a settlement agreement between a property owner at 2271 Acton Ridge Road, the Town of Acton, and the Maine District Court, to resolve a permitting issue. An agreement has been drafted by council and all parties agree; seconded by Walsh, All in favor. Motion signed.

10. PUBLIC COMMENT

Joyce Baksi questioned the culvert work start date. Can a sign be put up. Roux indicated a mailing will go out.

11. PENDING

12. ANNOUNCEMENTS

On Website

Walsh made a motion to adjourn the meeting; seconded by McGurty. All in favor. Motion carried.

13. MEMBERS PRESENT: Select Board Members, David Winchell, Jr., Tom McGurty, Edward Walsh, Daniel Norwood, and Town Administrator, Jennifer Roux

14. ATTENDANCE:

Richard Neal, Will Langley, Joyce Bakshi, Robin Ham, Joe Ruma, David Landry and Mousam Lake Association Members